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ABSTRACT

The effects of two kinds of lab experience in pre-student teaching education was the focus of a study on the development of oral language in elementary schools. The subjects were lower level college students in the course "Speech in the Elementary Schools." Two sections of the course were used, one in the fall quarter and one in the winter quarter. Fall quarter students had a variety of speech activities as learning tools, team teaching, closed circuit TV, and role playing. Winter quarter students used children in place of role playing. An attitude scale was administered at the beginning and end of each quarter. Comparative data were examined to note indications of change of attitude. Statements on the attitude scale were focused on psychologically, sociologically, and economically based questions. The results indicated that: 1) Group One was more preoccupied with self need than Group Two, which moved toward an attitude of responsibility; 2) Group One appeared to be less concerned with children than Group Two; and 3) Group Two gave evidence of greater respect for colleagues' abilities, preparation, and performance than Group One. (MBM)

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Research Report

ATTITUDE CHANGE IN PRE-STUDENT
TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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ATTITUDE CHANGE IN PRE-STUDENT
TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to observe the effects of two kinds of lab experience in pre-student teaching experience. The subject matter area was speech, the development of oral language in elementary schools. The subjects were regularly enrolled lower level college students in the course "Speech in the Elementary Schools." Two sections of the course were used, one fall quarter, one winter quarter.

Instruction was the same for each group. Laboratory hours for students of fall quarter were planned to include a variety of speech activities as learning tools, team teaching, the use of closed circuit TV, and role playing. For winter quarter, children were used in place of role playing.

At the beginning and ending of each quarter, an attitude scale was administered. Comparative data were examined to observe what differences were apparent and to note indications of change of attitude. Statements on the attitude scale were focused on psychologically, sociologically, and economically based questions. The answers reflected the attitudes.

In the results the positive and negative changes were clearly visible indicating that

1. In group I preoccupation with self need: "fell into the job," "need the money" as opposed to group II who worked with children and moved toward an attitude of responsibility to participate as teachers.
2. Group I appeared to be less concerned with children than was group II.
3. There is evidence of greater respect for colleagues' abilities, preparation, and performance by members of group II.

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RESEARCH REPORT

Attitude Change in Pre-Student Teaching Experience

PURPOSE

This study was made to verify the hypothesis: Teachers profit by actual teaching experience during learning of new or improved theory or teaching techniques in oral language.

The introduction of linguistics into the language arts curriculum has created a demand for new courses for teachers. Since early language learning is oral, preceding reading and writing, speech in the elementary school has added breadth and depth to the language arts program. Teachers need extended preparation in order that they are better able to meet the requirements. Many children, especially disadvantaged children, are language impoverished, creating difficulty in achievement across the entire learning spectrum. Planning courses through which the needs of teachers, or prospective teachers, will be met involves determining the techniques by which oral language concepts are presented and for which activities are planned and coordinated with other learning experiences. To reinforce the learning, pre-student teaching experience during laboratory hours, with children or in role playing situations, may be incorporated into the course. The question arises: is pre-student teaching experience with children better than role-playing situations in the development of the self concept of a teacher?

This study was made in search of an answer or an indication of an answer to that question.

DESIGN

Group I Pre-student Teaching Experience - Role Playing Situations

Subjects for the first part of the study were 85 college students regularly enrolled in the course "Speech in the Elementary School" at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, fall quarter 1968. They attended 3 lectures and 1 laboratory period per week for a period of ten weeks. Three lab periods were provided so that working numbers would be more manageable. During the lab periods the students were assigned teaching

experience from among varied speech activities: story telling, creative dramatics, discussion, conversation, puppetry, telephone, or one of thirty "speech improvement" lessons. In order that every student would have at least two teaching experiences, team teaching was used. The sessions were scheduled at the Research Center where 5 class spaces surrounded an observation area. Each space was equipped with one-way glass. Video taping was available so a part of every teaching session was taped. When not teaching, the student had an observation post to man and particular evaluations to prepare. At the close of each lab period, full evaluations, oral critiques, were held, using the tapes to reinforce the suggestions for improvement and to emphasize the strenghts demonstrated in each situation.

Group II Pre-student Experience with Children

78 college students regularly enrolled as those students in group I. These students were enrolled for winter quarter 1969. Their instruction and laboratory experience exactly paralleled that of the students of group I.

INSTRUMENT

A pre- post- Attitude Scale was used. The scale used was designed and used by Dr. Beverly Lusty and Associates for the N.D.E.A. Workshop for Inner City Teachers - Chicago at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle the summer of 1968. The title of the instrument was "Consortium Study of Teaching Needs: Teaching Language Learning to Disadvantaged Children." It seemed appropriate to use this scale, since the students with whom this study was done were from similar backgrounds of students to whom the instrument had been administered in previous situations.

The scale was composed of 2 major parts: part 1, divided into five sections, each of which had one major attitude statement to be rated or scaled on a seven stage continuum ranging from very good on the left to very poor or weak on the right.

good 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 bad

Part 2 provided the student with the opportunity to rank his choices. The ranks represented 1=no reason or answer to 5=extremely important reason or answer.

The procedure used was the interocular traumatic test. Berkson in Personal Communication, July 14, 1958 described the procedure as "You know what the data mean when the conclusion hits you between the eyes. The interocular traumatic test in simple, commands general agreement, and is often applicable; well conducted experiments often come out this way. But the enthusiast's interocular trauma may be the skeptic's random error. A little arithmetic can yield great peace of mind for little cost."¹

After reviewing the objectives of the study, the body of data, and the purposes of the analysis, it seemed appropriate to use the interocular traumatic test. Had the research continued, the body of data would have grounds for generalization. This study indicates some clear differences between the two groups and supports the contention that pre-student teaching experience with children is a desirable part of teacher education.

In tabulating each scale, pre- post scales were paired by the number which represented a student. Single scales were eliminated. As a means to pair scales, each student had been assigned an arbitrary number which was used on both scales.

The tabulated data were given an "interocular traumatic test." In essence, the pre- post test differences were examined to find indication of change, direction of movement, and interpretation of what such indications of change might mean. The responses are listed in order of preference.

RESULTS

Part I 1. "I consider my job as a middle grade teacher of the disadvantaged to be. . ."

Group I: Little difference observed. From the appearance of differences

1. Luce, R. Duncan, Robert R. Bush, Eugene Galantes. Readings in Mathematical Psychology, V. II. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1965. p. 543 "Bayesian Statistical Inference for Psychological Research."

Excerpted from: Edwards W., H. Lizderan, and L.J. Savage,
Psychological Review, 1963, 70, 193-242

observed at intermediate points on the scale, this group continued to feel socially superior and economically secure. Their choices indicate an almost euphoric attitude.

Group II: The difference here is the largest observed in any category. Examining each part of the entire segment, one observes that the greatest difference occurs, positively, toward the importance of the job, rewarding and enjoyable rewards of teaching in the face of recognized time consumption.

2. "As a teacher of the disadvantaged, I consider myself to be . . ."

Group I: Difference negligible.

Group II: Difference great enough to indicate positive change toward a recognized need for preparation, efficiency, and a solidly structured program.

3. "I consider my attitude toward the children to be . . ."

Group I: Difference negligible.

Group II: Difference here appeared to be great enough to dictate the examination of the particulars. The differences were seen in the area of sincerity and friendliness. In the post-test the students seemed to recognize the need for a positive approach to teaching.

4. "I consider my children to be . . ."

Group I: Difference negligible.

Items noted in examination of the individual segments of this item that the students recognized the disadvantaged to be poor, often dirty, to be mid-way between grateful and ungrateful, and often difficult to understand.

Group II: Difference pointed toward a more positive view of these children.

5. "I consider my colleagues to be . . ."

Group I: Difference between initial point of view and final point of view had changed little.

Group II: Difference here points toward increased respect for colleagues.

Part B 1. "I joined the profession and teach this type of child because. . ."

Group I: Inspection of a breakdown of the totals indicate:

- a. I just "fell into the job" and must continue my duties.
- b. The pay is good and I can use the money.
- c. I must help support my family.

Group II: The breakdown indicates:

- a. I must do my part to help the disadvantaged child.
- b. The pay is good and I can use the money.
- c. There are so many rewards in this type of teaching.
- d. There are so few teachers available that I must do my part.
- e. I must help support my family.

2. "A middle-grade teacher of the disadvantaged needs. . ."

Group I: A breakdown indicated that the students grew to feel for:

- a. A sense of humor,
- b. Patience,
- c. Organization.

Group II: The change here appears to indicate a real need for:

- a. Emotional "muscle",
- b. Objectivity,
- c. Understanding.

CONCLUSIONS

The obvious fact of "need" in each of the groups appears to be directly related to other responses:

1. In group I preoccupation with self need: "fell into the job", "need the money" as opposed to group II who worked with children and moved toward an attitude of responsibility to participate as teachers.
2. Group I appeared to be less concerned with children than was group II.
3. The evidence of greater respect for colleagues' abilities, preparation, and performance by members of group II.

If the experience with children did little else than transfer pre-occupation from self to entire involvement with others, particularly with children, then the study indicates a very important value in pre-student teaching experience with children. Short time schedule and lack of accounting for other variables allowed the researcher to point only to "indication," indication which supports the thesis that pre-student teaching experience appears to reinforce basic teacher training and aids the student teacher in assessing her own attitudes and firming up her own healthy teaching philosophy.

RECOMMENDED RESEARCH

Teachers of teacher training courses in techniques could provide data on attitude change in trainees in much the same manner in which this research was done. Done over a longer period of time, the body of data would take on significance and lend support to the work of educators who recommend a variety of pre-student experiences in teacher training programs.

An interesting and broader research base might well include 2 groups at different times of the year at more than one school. Each school would administer the same instrument, at the same time to matched groups of students in a techniques course. The techniques could have the same content base or a planned variety of content base. Items in course planning such as behavioral objectives, time between pre- post test, participants could be easily unified. Such a study offers many possibilities for attitude research. The implications for self concept development in the participants is in itself a provoking thought.